



Corporate *NO: R008*

Report *COUNCIL DATE: January 21, 2002*

REGULAR COUNCIL			
TO:	Mayor & Council	DATE:	January 17, 2002
FROM:	General Manager, Engineering	FILE:	0023-14577
		NEW:	3900-20(14577)
SUBJECT:	Proposed Amendments to Surrey Fee Setting By-law		

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council:

1. Approve a new service of providing public information consultants' reports without the need for a Freedom of Information Request.
2. Approve the inclusion of a new \$50.00 fee for the provision of consultant reports currently in City files, effective February 1, 2002; and
3. Instruct the City Clerk to introduce an appropriate amendment By-law to implement the above recommendations.

INTENT

The intent of this report is to obtain Council's approval to amend the Surrey Fee Setting By-law to introduce a new fee for the provision of consultant reports currently in City files.

BACKGROUND

As part of the land development process, consultant reports are generated and submitted to the City. These reports deal with issues such as soil conditions on the site and traffic impacts of the new development.

The consultant reports are occasionally requested by residents or developers. As these reports are public information, they can be provided. The mechanism to retrieve these reports is currently by a Freedom of Information (FOI) request. However, the FOI can be a lengthy and somewhat cumbersome process for the person requesting the report, and from the City's point of view, the cost to provide a report is not covered unless the effort exceeds 3 hours. In most cases, the time required is less than 3 hours.

DISCUSSION

New Fee for Reports in City Files

A fee of \$50 is proposed for the provision of consultant reports that are currently available through FOI and are in City files in order to provide more streamlined customer service. This fee is based on anticipated research and copying costs to provide a consultant report. The new fee would be charged for each request to retrieve and copy the requested consultant report. While all reasonable efforts would be made to find the requested report, where a report cannot be found or was determined not to exist, the fee would still apply to offset the staff cost for the search. By making consultant reports available through the City counters, it would not be necessary for the public to initiate the FOI process.

CONCLUSION

The consultant reports in City files have been available through FOI but this is a cumbersome process for the public and provides minimal cost recovery for the City. The proposed new service and fee will provide faster response for the public and is anticipated to cover the retrieval and copy costs. The time to provide a consultant report is also expected to be reduced as a request can be made directly over the front counters, avoiding the FOI process. It is recommended that a new service and fee of \$50.00 be introduced effective February 1, 2002, for research and provision of consultant reports currently in City files. It is further recommended that the City Clerk be authorized to bring forward for the required readings amendment by-laws to implement the above recommendations.

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